

EDUCATORS OF ARTS TEACHERS: COHERENCE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHING QUALITY

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Abstract

The principles of education for sustainable development implemented in Lithuanian education system shifted perceptions of teachers' roles from disseminating knowledge towards developing students' competences of responsible, critical and creative thinking and acting. Arts teachers' competency to effectively implement goals of arts education in schools is closely related to their education and its quality, which is mainly connected with competences of academic staff, i. e. educators. It is very important that teacher educators are engaged in the permanent professional development closely connected with the area of their subject. The given research aimed to examine coherence between professional development and teaching quality of academic staff of Department of Arts Education in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences Faculty of Education. 90 students of dance pedagogy, theater pedagogy BA level and dance pedagogy, music pedagogy and visual arts pedagogy MA level participated in the survey. The findings revealed that students have positive opinion about high level of educators' subject knowledge, but lower about variety of teaching methods applied in study process and assessment objectivity in BA programmes.

KEYWORDS: arts teacher, educator, teaching quality, professional development.

Introduction

Starting point of given research was our involvement into self-evaluation process of dance pedagogy, theater pedagogy BA programmes and dance pedagogy, music pedagogy and pedagogy of visual arts MA programmes administrated by the Department of Arts Education of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. Our need to evaluate quality of study process in order to assure its improvement as well as ground it according to national and European documents on education and especially on teacher training induced our scientific interest to research the problem of teaching quality and its assurance through professional development of academic staff of the Department of Arts Education. This interest was strengthened by works of scholars investigating close problems in other higher education institutions in Lithuania (Sirtautienė, 2006; Adomavičienė, Pukelytė, 2009; Marcinkevičienė, Adomavičienė, 2009; Daukilas, 2010; Drūteikienė, Mackelo, 2010; Kerevičienė, Satkauskaitė, 2011).

Analysis of documents (Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability, 2005; UNESCO and Sustainable Development, 2005; The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: 2005-2014, 2007; Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on Education for Sustainable Development, 2010) and research findings (Adomaitienė, Zubrickienė, Andriekienė, 2006; Brūzgelevičienė, 2006; Jucevičienė, 2006) on sustainable development and education for sustainable development (ESD) oriented our research towards investigation of the problem of teaching quality in the light of ESD principles. ESD points out importance of education, teacher education and teacher educators' role in assurance of sustainability principles implementation in social, economical and environmental spheres of life.

According to the documents (The Quality of Teachers, 2006; Improving the Quality of Teacher Education, 2007; Teacher Education in Europe Policy, 2008) if teacher educators seek to be role models for their students – future teachers, then educators should be explicit about their own professional quality. The indicators of which include commitment for ESD principles of lifelong learning, use of variety of pedagogical techniques that promote participatory, independent learning, critical and creative thinking skills as well as values, knowledge and understanding of their subject matter taking into account context, global issues and local needs. Besides, teacher educators have to create appropriate learning environment so that future teachers would achieve needed competences and qualifications indicated in national (Profile of Teacher Professional Competences, 2007; Law on Science and Education, 2009; Regulations on Teacher Education, 2010) and international documents (Common European Principles for Teacher Competencies and Qualifications, 2005; Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, 2005).

High standards for the delivery of arts education programmes underlined in the Final Report of The Second World Conference on Arts Education in Seoul (2010) challenges high level of arts teacher education which is closely connected with their educators' competences. Situation of arts teachers' educators teaching quality and professional development in relation to ESD principles emerges as the problem in the context of investigations of mentioned issues in other types of higher education. **The aim**

of the research is to investigate coherence between teaching quality and professional development of teachers of the Department of Arts Education in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. The research seeks to find out: 1) in which areas, forms and ways of participation academic staff of the Department of Arts Education develops professional quality; 2) what is students of arts education study programmes in BA and MA level opinion on educators professional quality; 3) how professional development is connected with educators teaching quality. **Object of the research** – coherence between teaching quality and professional development of arts teachers' educators.

Methods and methodologies

The research methodology was grounded by the approach of coordination of qualitative and quantitative research type (Bitinas, 2006). This was combined with the principles of ESD in higher education (Jucevičienė and others, 2006). Assuming that ESD has several principles which should be implemented in higher education, as the basis for this research we chose ones related to teacher educators teaching quality and professional improvement: a) lifelong learning promotion in teaching subjects; 2) variety of pedagogical techniques which promote participatory, independent learning, critical and creative thinking skills of students; 3) relevance and usefulness of study subjects in relation to students expectations and needs as well as anticipated job-related roles and assessment.

Analysis and generalization of scientific literature, national and European documents on education and education for sustainable development allowed structure a questionnaire for students and an analysis of educators' professional development areas, forms and ways of participation according to ESD principles chosen as a basis of the research. As students opinion is one of the major factors in quality assessment (Sirtautienė, 2006), we chose to carry out students survey. Content analysis of the reports of scientific activities (2007–2011) of Department of Arts Education was used as data collection method of professional development of academic staff.

Survey was held during the period of February–March, 2012 in the Department of Arts Education. Students had to give positive or negative answers to statements about teaching quality based on evaluation of subjects which were taught during autumn semestre of 2011. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to students of all study programmes of the Department of Arts Education. Research sample included 90 students of dance pedagogy (n=46), theater pedagogy (n=22) bachelor programme, dance education, music education, visual arts education and visual arts history education master programmes (n=22).

Results of the research

Questioning of future arts teachers revealed that most of lifelong learning principles are promoted in teaching subjects (figure 1). There were found certain differences between answers of MA and BA students.

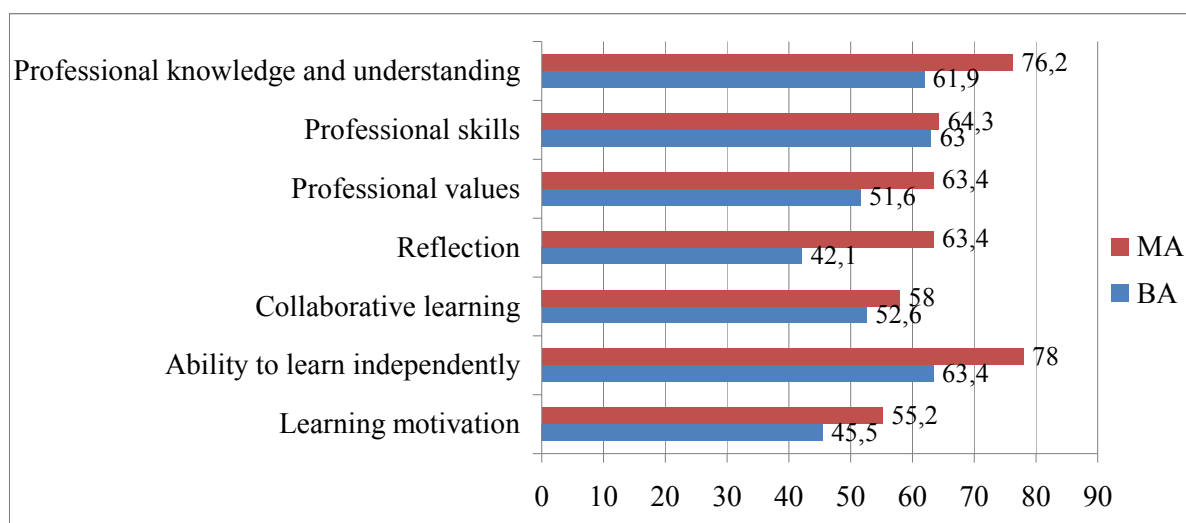


Figure 1. Students' opinion about lifelong learning principles promotion in study subjects (percentage of positive answers)

Master students admitted that educators encourage students' ability to learn independently and acquire professional knowledge and skills. BA students also gave most positive answers to these questions, however on a lower percentage. Biggest difference, about 20 percent, in MA and BA opinion was about possibility for reflection during subject studies. This shows that teacher educators teaching in the first cycle give less opportunity for students to reflect on their studies, achievements or subject matter than in second cycle. Stimulation of learning motivation concerns us at this point especially in BA level as less than half students indicated presence of this aspect in subject studies. Similar situation is with introduction to students of collaborative learning and fostering professional values. Nevertheless, on a whole answers about promotion of collaborative work, professional values, skills, knowledge and understanding in study subjects are positive both from more than a half of MA and BA respondents.

Analysis of students' opinion based on their attitude to study subjects of autumn semestre year 2011 content and context revealed certain differences between answers of BA and MA level students (figure 2).

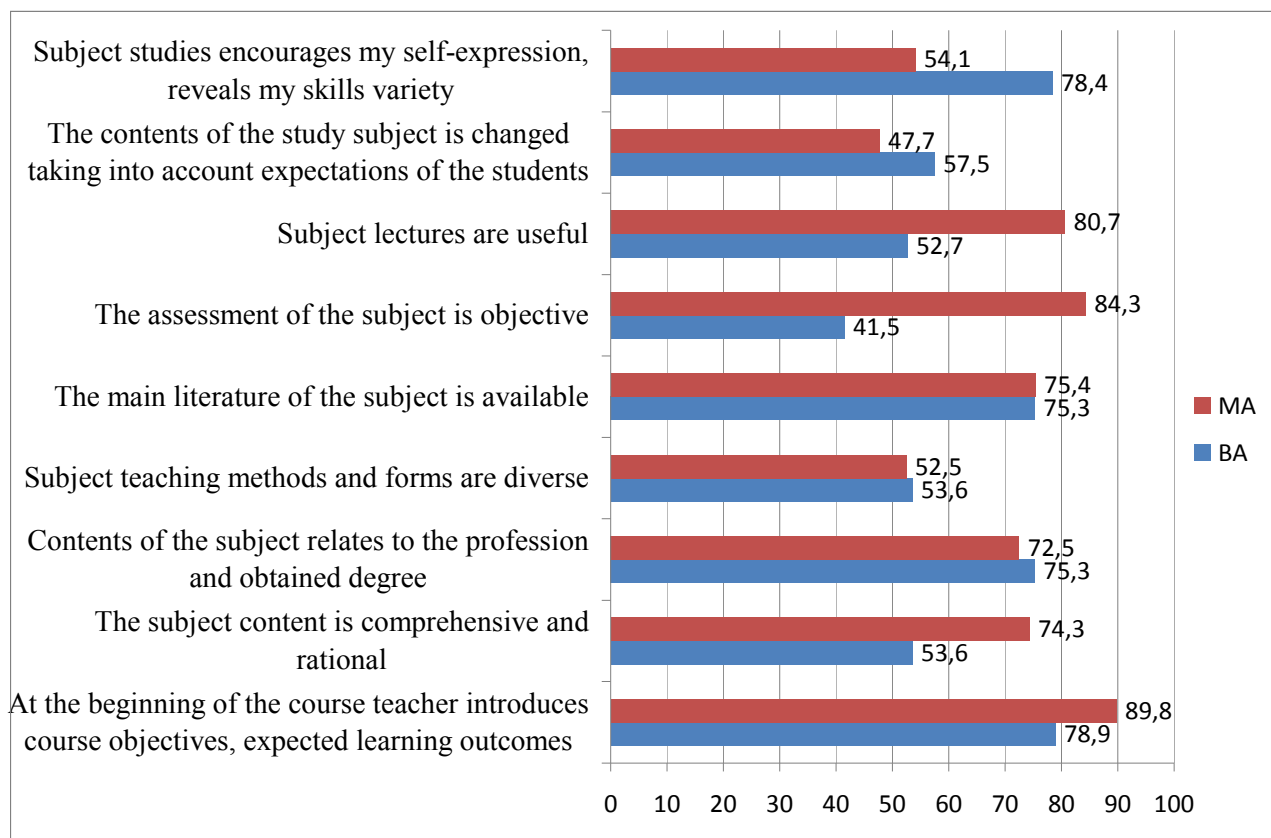


Figure 2. Students' opinion about study subject content and context (percentage of positive answers)

Master programme students gave more positive answers about four aspects of subject content and context: usefulness of subjects, comprehension and rationality of subject content, introduction of course objectives and expected learning outcomes as well as objectivity of assessment. Only areas of students' self-expression skills engouragement and changes according to students' expectations were evaluated higher by BA students. Percentage of respodents opinion about assessment objectivity in BA programmes concerns us the most as less than half students gave positive answer on this issue. Difference nearly in twice positive answers between MA and BA students on assessment objectivity raises questions and need to examine this aspect of subject content more deeply, trying to find out reasons of such situation.

Another area of our concern could be shortage of variety of teaching methods used by educators in their subjects. Only half of both BA and MA students indicated appearance of teaching methods diversity during autumn of 2011 semestre studies. Situation when less positive answers were given by MA students is related to a change of subject content according to students' expectations. This was the only area of subject content and context analysis when BA students gave more positive answers.

Analysis of students' opinion about pedagogical tehniques used by educators in different study subjects revealed that in all positions BA students are less satisfied than MA students (figure 3).

Especially obvious difference in around 20 percent is in areas of readiness to help students solve problems, encouragement to seek best results, engagement with study subject and formulation research-based questions and problem solving.

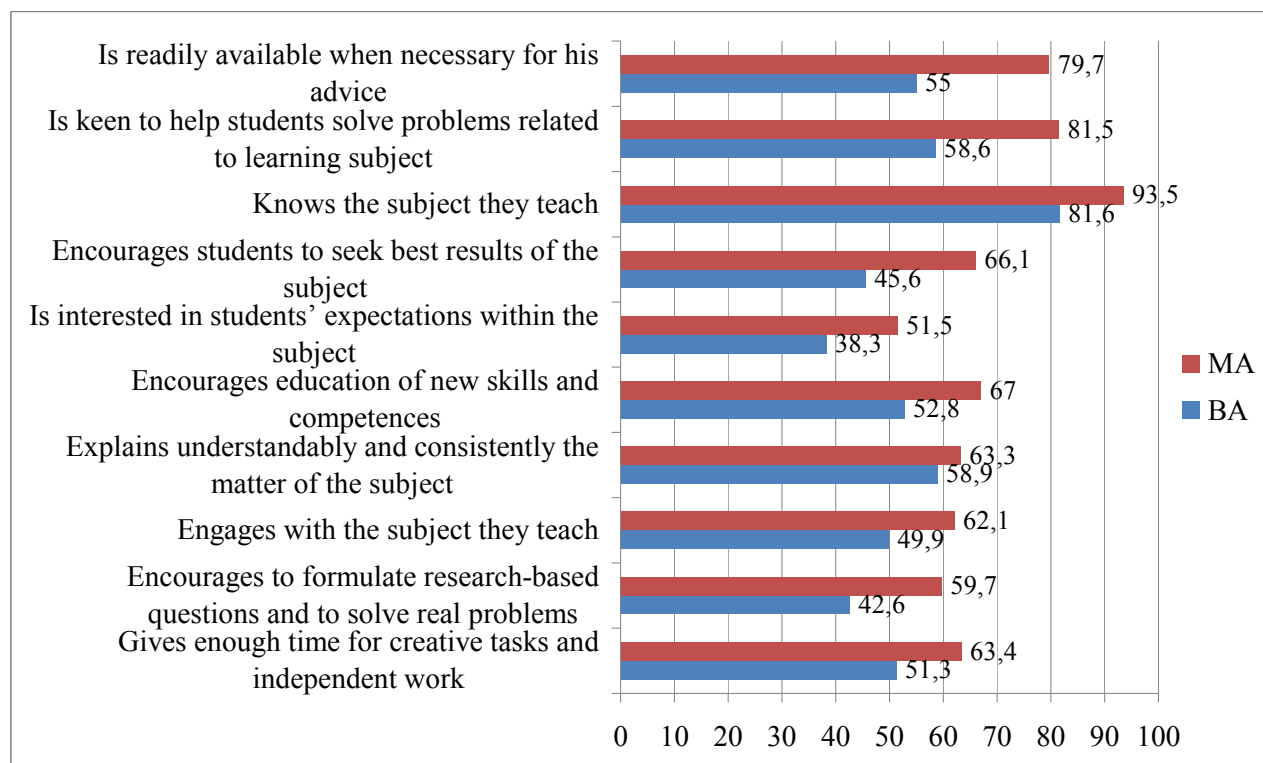


Figure 3. Students' opinion about variety of pedagogical techniques used by educators (percentage of positive answers)

The highest concern for us is less than third of BA students' positive answers to educators' interest in students' expectations within the subject. More than half both MA and BA respondents admitted satisfaction with educators' activities to encourage students educate new skills and competences as well as giving enough time for creative tasks and independent work. Together with high level of educators' subject knowledge featured out both in first and second cycle studies give us inspiration and thinking that academic staff of the Department of Arts Education is moving towards needed direction of quality assurance.

Summarizing students' questionnaire results it should be mentioned that unfolding differences of teaching quality aspects between master and bachelor programmes raises questions and requires more deep and thorough investigations as most of academic staff of the Department of Arts Education are teaching both in MA and BA level studies.

Analysis of the reports of scientific activities (2007–2011) of the Department of Arts Education revealed main areas, forms and ways of participation in professional development of academic staff (table 1).

Table 1. Professional development of the Department of Arts Education academic staff

Areas of professional development		Forms of professional development	Ways of participation
Conceptual and philosophical grounding of the curriculum		National and international conferences in Lithuania and abroad	Participant with paper presentations
			Participant
Preparation of students for anticipated job-related roles	educator	National and international conferences in Lithuania and abroad	Participant with paper presentations
			Participant
		Workshops	Teacher
			Attendant
	artist	Workshops	Participant (choreographer, dancer, musician, conductor, actor, director, stage designer, painter, etc)
		Artistic projects	
		Festivals, exhibitions	
	researcher	National and international conferences in Lithuania and abroad	Participant with paper presentations
			Participant
		Scientific research projects	Author, co-author
		Scientific publications in national and international journals	
	education manager	National and institutional projects	Participant
Implementation of Bologna process principles (strengthening of the learning paradigm and creating curricula based on learning outcomes and competences)	culture agent	National and institutional projects	Expert-coordinator, expert-executor
		Seminars	Participant
Variety of teaching methods and forms in higher education		National and institutional professional development programmes	Participant
		Seminars	

Four areas of professional development featured out. Teachers were improving their qualification conceptual and philosophical grounding of the curriculum, preparation of students for anticipated job-related roles, implementation of Bologna process principles (strengthening of the learning paradigm and creating curricula based on learning outcomes and competences) and variety of teaching methods and forms in higher education.

Within these areas they used means of participation in national and international conferences in Lithuania and abroad (Latvia, Poland, Sweden, Austria, France, Finland, UK, USA, etc) as participants and participants with paper presentations. Seminars and workshops dominate in area of improving preparation of students for anticipated job-related roles such as educator, artist, researcher, education manager and culture agent. As most of teachers of Department of Arts Education are not only scholars, but also acknowledged artists who educate future dance, theater, music, visual arts teachers it is important that they develop professionally as artist too. Participation in artistic projects such as drama, dance or music performances, national and international arts festivals and exhibitions with their artistic production were main means of improving professional qualification as artists.

Role of education researcher teachers of Department of Arts Education improved implementing scientific research projects and writing scientific publications in national and international journals and conference proceedings. The role of education manager in recent years was quite expanded through participation in the national projects related to leadership in education. Less developed area of professional improvement is preparation of students for the role of cultural agent where students have to get knowledge and skills in organizing activities in informal education in cultural institutions.

The most engaging medium of professional development of several teachers of Department of Arts Education since 2010 is the institutional project “Improving the quality of bachelor-level teacher preparation programmes at Vilnius Pedagogical University”. During this project various aspects of teaching quality in higher education such as formulating programme goals and learning outcomes, compliance of teaching and assessment methods according to the concepts of Dublin descriptors, ECTS, National Qualification Framework, other national and European documents of higher education and education of teachers particularly.

Comparison of areas of educators’ professional development and areas of biggest concern of teaching quality according to students’ opinion allows us to presume that certain aspects are related. Higher percentage of positive answers of BA students than MA students about change of subject content according to students expectations might be related to the fact that teachers of BA programmes participated in seminars and workshops within the University project for improvement of bachelor-level teacher preparation programmes where they improved their competences and understanding about implementation of principles of Bologna process responsibly involving students into formulating study goals and learning outcomes, planning study content and time. Though question why MA students’ opinion on this issue is less positive arises as most of educators teaching in BA programmes teach also in MA level.

Lower than a half of BA respondents’ positive opinion about objectivity of assessment as well as formulation of research-based questions and problem solving encouragement induce thinking that educators are not ready yet for implementation of these issues in spite of their participation in professional development seminars and programmes related. Nevertheless, high positive opinion both of MA and BA respondents about educators’ subject knowledge and vast professional development through participation in numerous of artistic and scientific activities show that academic staff is highly qualified as specialists combining artistic and scholar competences.

Conclusions

1. The analysis of education documents and scientific literature allows to state that teacher educators professional quality should be improved implementing ESD principles in higher education through enhancing lifelong learning values, use of variety of pedagogical techniques that promote participatory, independent learning, critical and creative thinking skills as well as values, knowledge and understanding of subject matter taking into account context, global issues and local needs.
2. Survey of future arts teachers both of bachelor and master programmes exposed high percentage of positive opinion on educators’ subject knowledge and promotion of independent learning, but lower about variety of teaching methods used by educators, objectivity of assessment, formulation of research-based questions and problem solving.
3. There were certain differences in attitudes of MA and BA students on usefulness of subjects, comprehension of subject content, use of reflection during studies and stimulation of learning motivation of students which were higher of MA respondents than BA.
4. Comparison of areas of educators’ professional development which were mostly related to improvement of artistic and scholar competences and areas of biggest concern of teaching methods variety both in MA and BA programmes, assessment objectivity in BA studies according to students’ opinion allows us to presume that impetuous break-through should be initiated in the improvement of educators teaching competences.

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MENO DALYKŲ MOKYTOJŲ RENGĖJAI: KVALIFIKACIJOS KĖLIMO IR DĖSTYMO KOKYBĖS SANTYKIS

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S a n t r a u k a

Darnaus vystymo švietimo principai skatinti mokymąsi visą gyvenimą, užtikrinti mokymo technologijų įvairovę, kuri plėtotų aktyvų ir savarankišką mokymąsi, kritinį ir kūrybinį mąstymą, profesinių žinių įgijimą, vertybių ir gebėjimų ugdymąsi, atsižvelgiant į globalų kontekstą ir lokalius poreikius yra deklaruojami įvairuose Lietuvos ir Europos švietimo dokumentuose, aukštųjų mokyklų nuostatuose. Tačiau, kyla klausimas, kaip tai yra įgyvendinama aukštojo mokslo studijų praktikoje, rengiant meno dalykų mokytojus, kuriems keliami ypač griežti reikalavimai, siekiant organizuoti aukšto lygio meninį ugdymą. Tyrimo tikslas: atskleisti meno dalykų mokytojų rengėjų kvalifikacijos kėlimo ir dėstymo kokybės santykio aspektus, siekiant atsakyti į klausimus: 1) kokiose srityse, kokiomis formomis ir būdais dėstytojai, rengiantys būsimus meno pedagogus, kelia kvalifikaciją; 2) kokia yra bakalauro ir magistro programų studentų nuomonė apie dėstymo kokybę; 3) kaip siejasi kvalifikacijos tobulinimo sritys ir dėstymo kokybė. Tyrimo objektas – meno dalykų mokytojų rengėjų kvalifikacijos kėlimo ir dėstymo kokybės santykis. Tyrime naudoti šie metodai: Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto ugdymo mokslų fakulteto Meninio ugdymo katedros mokslinės veiklos (2007–2011) ataskaitų kontentinė analizė ir būsimų meno dalykų mokytojų anketinė apklausa, kuri buvo vykdyta 2012 metų vasario–kovo mėn. Tyrime dalyvavo 90 Meninio ugdymo katedros administruojamų šokio pedagogikos bakalauro (n=46), teatro pedagogikos bakalauro (n=22), šokio edukologijos, muzikos edukologijos, dailės edukologijos, dailės istorijos edukologijos magistro (n=22) programų studentai.

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė studentų nuomonę, kurią jie formulavo, remdamiesi savo požiūriu į 2011 metų rudens semestro dalykų dėstymo kokybę. Studentų apklausos analizė parodė nuomonių skirtumus tarp bakalauro ir magistro programų studentų. Daugumoje atvejų magistrantai pozityviau vertino dėstymo kokybę nei bakalai. Tai ypač akivaizdu, analizuojant jų požiūrį į studijų dalykų naudingumą, jų turinio išsamumą ir racionalumą bei vertinimo objektyvumą. Vienintelė pozicija, kur bakalai buvo pozityvesni nei magistrantai, buvo studijų dalyko turinio kaita, atsižvelgiant į studentų lūkesčius. Šią situaciją galima būtų sieti su dėstytojų kvalifikacijos tobulinimo sričių ir formų analizės metu išaiškėjusiomis tendencijomis, kurios rodo, kad bakalauro programose dėstantys dėstytojai, nuo 2010 metų dalyvaudami universiteto projekte „Edukologų rengimo kokybės gerinimas atnaujinant pirmos studijų pakopos programas Vilniaus pedagoginiame universitete“, įsisavino studentų įtraukimo į studijų

programos tikslų ir studijų rezultatų formulavimą bei studijų laiko ir turinio planavimą. Todėl bakalauro programos buvo atnaujinamos atsižvelgiant į studentų išsakytas nuomones. Skirtumas tarp bakalauro ir magistro programų respondentų atsakymų kelia klausimą, kurį būtina nagrinėti giliau ir plačiau, nes dauguma bakalauro programos dėstytojų dėsto ir magistrantūros programose.

Apibendrinant atlikto tyrimo rezultatus galima padaryti išvadas, kad būsimų meno dalykų mokytojų nuomonė apie dėstytojų kokybę yra teigiama, ypač dėstytojų dalyko žinių ir savarankiško mokymosi skatinimo srityse. Tačiau mokymo metodų įvairovė, probleminių klausimų kėlimo ir sprendimo galimybės, bakalauro studijų atveju ir vertinimo objektyvumo sritys rodo mažesnio studentų skaičiaus teigiamą vertinimą. Lyginant dėstytojų kvalifikacijos kėlimo ir studentų teigiamo dėstytojų kokybės vertinimo sritis, atsiskleidė dėstytojų dalyvavimo universiteto projektuose, tobulinančiuose edukologų rengimą, ir teigiamos bakalauro studentų nuomonės apie dalykų atnaujinimą sąsajos.